



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 6, 2015

Last Wednesday was the first day of business for the 2015 Long Session of the North Carolina Legislature. The first and second weeks of the new session were marked by rampant bill filings in the House and Senate as well as the distribution of gavels to Committee Chairs. The House is under new leadership this session, following the election of Representative Tim Moore as Speaker. Thus far, numerous education bills have been filed but only one relevant bill ([SB 14](#)) has been heard in committee.

On Wednesday, February 4, the Legislature welcomed Governor McCrory to deliver the State of the State Address from the floor of the House. The speech focused on the Governor's main objectives for the current Session of the General Assembly and the second half of his term. Pertaining to K-12 public education, the Governor prioritized the following:

- Student competitiveness in a global economy.
- Closing the skills gap.
- Rewarding teachers for results-driven leadership.
- Fulfilling a promise to raise teacher base pay to \$35,000 a year.
- Reducing testing (based on the work of the State Board of Education's (SBE) Testing Taskforce, composed of superintendents, principals, and teachers, chaired by SBE members Olivia Oxendine and Vice-Chair Buddy Collins).
- Bringing Wi-Fi to all NC classrooms and increasing long distance learning.
- Expediting the teacher certification processes by acknowledging an individual's experience and subject expertise.

For the video of the Governor's State of the State Address, click [here](#).

The State Board of Education also met this week garnering significant media attention and interest for two major items – the A-F School Performance Grades (as required by G.S. 115C-83.15) and the consideration of policies and agreements for two virtual charter school pilots. As directed by legislation in 2014, SBE released the School Performance Grades on Thursday for every qualifying public school in the state. For these Grades and the School Report Cards, click [here](#).

As directed by 2014 legislation, SBE approved two virtual charter schools to participate in a four-year pilot program. The enabling legislation was very prescriptive about the funding and policies that frame the pilot program. The two applicants will be operational beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

Relevant Bills in Committee This Week:

[SB 14](#) Academic Standards/Rules Review/Coal Ash/Funds (Brown, Harrington, B. Jackson)
This bill passed the Senate this week and would direct SBE to transfer \$100,000 from its current operating budget to the Office of Administrative Hearings to pay for the Rules Review Commission's litigation costs associated with defending *North Carolina State Board of Education v. The State of North Carolina and the Rules Review Commission*, a declaratory judgment action. Funds would remain available for this proposed use during the 2015-16 fiscal year.

SB 14 would also direct the Department of Public instruction (DPI) to transfer \$275,000 from its current operating budget to the Department of Administration (DOA) to support operations of the Academic Standards Review Commission (ASRC), which is evaluating the current standards in North Carolina and making recommendations on the NC Standard Course of Study. Funds would be used for prescribed expenditures and remain available until ASRC terminates on December 31, 2015, or when its final report is filed.

Funds transferred to the ASRC through this bill could not be used to conduct any survey related to the adoption of academic standards or to contract for such, as this work has already been completed. ASRC is subject to the Public Records Act and the Open Meetings Law. SB 14 describes and clarifies other duties that ASRC must comply with, such as publishing its work on its website and streaming official meetings over the Internet.

- Passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on 2/2/15
- Passed the Senate on 2/4/2015
- Regular message sent to House
- Regular message received in the House from the Senate on 2/5/15

Relevant Bills with Action This Week:

[HB 9](#) Restore School Calendar Education Purpose Waiver (Horn, Martin, Riddell, Lucas)

- Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12

[HB 13](#) Amend School Health Assessment Requirement (Torbett)

- Referred to the House Committee on Health, if favorable, Education – K-12

[HB 15](#) Year-Round Funds for Community Colleges Universal General Education Transfer Courses (Pendleton, Stam, Yarborough)

- Referred to the House Committee on Education – Community Colleges

[HB 18](#) Planning Year for Cooperative Innovative High Schools (S. Martin, Horn, Shepard, Hanes)

- Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12, if favorable, Appropriations

- [HB 19](#) ([SB 37](#)) Waive Tuition/Fallen Officer was Guardian (C. Graham)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – Universities, if favorable, Appropriations
- [HB 21](#) ([SB 31](#)) Restore Teaching Fellows Program (Pierce, L. Hall)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Appropriations
- [HB 25](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Alamance-Burlington (Riddell, Ross)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12, if favorable, Commerce and Job Development
- [HB 26](#) Restore Education Sales Tax Holiday (Pierce, R. Moore, L. Hall)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Finance
- [HB 28](#) Root Out Poverty/Appropriate Funds (Pierce)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Appropriations
- [HB 29](#) Technical Changes to Courses of Study Statute (L. Johnson, Glazier, Holloway, Horn)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12
- [HB 34](#) School Calendar Flexibility/Certain Counties (Jones, Holloway)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12, if favorable, Commerce and Job Development
- [HB 35](#) Education Innovation Task Force (Elmore, S. Martin, Horn, Cotham)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – K-12
- [HB 47](#) Youth Career Connect (Brody, Horn)
 - Referred to the House Committee on Education – Community Colleges
- [HB 53](#) LEA Flexibility for Supplemental Pay (Malone, Pendleton, Stam, Bryan)
 - Filed
- [SB 3](#) State Employees/No Payroll Deductions (Hise)
 - Referred to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate
- [SB 6](#) ([HB 56](#)) State Health Plan/Rehired Retiree Eligibility (Tillman, Barefoot)
 - Referred to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate
- [SB 9](#) Add IT Committee (Apodaca)
 - Adopted in the Senate

[SB 14](#) Academic Standards/Rules Review/Coal Ash/Funds (Brown, Harrington, B. Jackson)

- Passed the Senate on 2/4/15
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[SB 30](#) Value Student Learning Act (Stein)

- Referred to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate

Contact Information:

Rachel E. Beaulieu
Department of Public Instruction
Legislative & Community Relations Director
919-807-4035
Rachel.Beaulieu@dpi.nc.gov

Zane B. Stilwell, II
State Board of Education
Legislative Relations & Policy
919-807-4068
Zane.Stilwell@dpi.nc.gov

Loretta Peace-Bunch
Legislative Assistant
919-807-3403
Loretta.Peace-Bunch@dpi.nc.gov